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NSC BRIEFING

22 April 1959

CUBA

- I. Castro continues his one-man rule; no indications he intends relinquish control over any government policies and actions.
 - A. Agrarian reform program and measures to reduce rents and utility rates alienating business groups but no sign yet of organized opposition; Castro retains overwhelming popularity among lower classes.
- II. Such nationalistic and anti-American statements as the US "sent Batista tanks and airplanes at a peso apiece to fight against the people" not repeated during visit here; but there are at least two Communists in his entourage.
 - A. On 20 April Raul Castro in an attack on "enemies of Cuban revolution" savagely attacked the US, ex-President Figueras of Costa Rica, the international press, and a leader of Cuban-American cultural institute. Raul said speech not impromptu but "carefully considered."
 - B. ^{FIDEL} Castro's attitudes and policies probably undergoing modification as revolutionary fervor subsides and as he gains political experience, but basic programs and beliefs will probably remain unchanged.
 - C. Convinced that US influence in Cuba has retarded social, economic and political development; apparent that he distrusts US and while seeking economic benefits at the same time trying to loosen strong economic and political ties.
- III. Communists, operating openly, have gained footholds in organized labor, armed forces, and press.

- A. Highly publicized pro-Communists "Che" Guevara and Raul Castro hold top positions of command in the military; pre-Communist Carlos Franqui edits self-styled "official" newspaper and is press advisor to President Urrutia.
- IV. May open for further Communist penetration; Castro has made no serious attempt to proscribe Communist activities.
 - A. Indoctrination programs in the schools for educating the illiterate rural masses reported to be strongly anti-American; Communists believed participating in committee to rewrite text books; Marxist teaching included in military education program.
 - B. Catholic church, however, is alarmed and planning measures, including formation of a Catholic political party, to combat Communism. Church irritated that last rites not permitted to some who have been executed.
- V. Castro's campaign against dictatorships has undergone modification.
 - A. From a position of open and aggressive support for anti-dictator movements, he claims to have moved to a more cautious one of moral support and has taken token steps to prevent the launching of invasion expeditions from Cuba.
 - 1. There has been no action, however, against Communist-infiltrated groups generally associated with "Che" Guevara and Raul Castro.
 - 2. Support for Communist-infiltrated Nicaraguan and Dominican exiles also continues; exile groups still operate freely in Cuba.